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■ Commemorative Issue: UNDRO 1972-1992

NEWS
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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR
BUREAU DU COORDONNATEUR DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR LES SECOURS EN CAS DE CATASTROPHE
PALAIS DES NATIONS CH 1211 GENEVE 10 - SWITZERLAND

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A Message from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

The world is changing at a fast pace and is politically, economically and socially vastly different from what it was when the United Nations was founded in 1945.

Jan Eliasson

Our organization is faced with the challenge of keeping pace with changes such as the disappearance of the ideological cleavage between East and West, and is gaining increasing importance as one of the main instruments for ensuring peace and security around the world. It is undertaking new tasks in the economic and social field, including action to preserve our environment. Under the leadership of a new Secretary-General, it has embarked on a course aimed at enhancing its effectiveness as an organization dealing with the most pressing problems of mankind.

Building on the work initiated twenty years ago with the creation of UNDRO, the General Assembly adopted, last December, resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of the co-ordination of humanitarian assistance in the United Nations. This resolution sets out basic principles for humanitarian assistance to be provided by the Organization, and recommends specific measures to enhance prompt and co-ordinated response to natural disasters and complex emergencies, including the establishment of a central emergency revolving fund of US $50 million as a cash flow mechanism for use in the initial phase of emergencies.

The Secretary-General has indicated the importance he attaches to humanitarian assistance by establishing a new Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which he asked me to head. The scope of activities of the Department is wide and its work should be understood within the overall frame-

Message du Secrétaire général adjoint aux affaires humanitaires

Le monde évolue rapidement et s'est considérablement transformé, politiquement, économiquement et socialement, depuis la création de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en 1945.

Notre Organisation doit évoluer au rythme des changements qui surviennent, comme par exemple la disparition de l'antagonisme idéologique entre l'Est et l'Ouest, et prend une importance accrue parmi les principales instances chargées de veiller au maintien de la paix et de la sécurité dans le monde. Elle assume de nouvelles responsabilités dans le domaine économique et social, notamment en matière de protection de l'environnement. Sous la direction de son nouveau Secrétaire général, elle s'est engagée sur une voie l'incitant à jouer un rôle accru dans la recherche de solutions aux problèmes les plus urgents de l'humanité.

Faisant suite aux activités lancées il y a 20 ans lors de la création de l'UNDRO, l'Assemblée générale a adopté, en décembre dernier, la résolution 46/182 sur le renforcement de la coordination de l'aide humanitaire de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. Dans cette résolution, l'Assemblée générale énonce les principes directeurs régissant le rôle de l'Organisation dans le domaine de l'aide humanitaire et recommande l'adoption de mesures particulières propres à assurer une intervention rapide et coordonnée en cas de catastrophe naturelle ou de situation d'urgence complexe, notamment la création d'un fond central de secours autorenouvelable de 50 millions de dollars, qui devrait être conçu comme un mécanisme d'autofinancement permettant de faire face à la phase initiale des situations d'urgence.

Le Secrétaire général a prouvé l'importance qu'il attachait à l'aide humanitaire en créant le Département des affaires humanitaires, dont il m'a confié la direction. Le Département est responsable d'une vaste série d'activités et sa tâche doit être envisagée dans le cadre général de la restructuration du secrétariat. Il installera des bureaux à New York et à Genève et réunira les

work of a reorganized Secretariat. The Department will have offices in New York and in Geneva. It will bring together a strengthened UNDRO with other ad hoc *mechanisms that have recently been established for specific complex emergencies to create a more effective and streamlined emergency management capacity. Political co-ordination and leadership will be exercised in New York, with special emphasis on those grey areas where humanitarian and political issues are closely intermingled.*

As resolution 46/182 and recent world events indicate, the United Nations is increasingly expected not only to provide humanitarian assistance for complex emergencies and other disasters but also to look into the constraints that hamper the provision of such assistance, so as to address their root causes and to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development. As part of this endeavour it is important for us to ensure safe access and delivery of relief to affected populations in zones of conflict. The various agencies of the United Nations involved in political, humanitarian and development issues should work closely together and enhance their combined efforts to achieve the principal objectives of the Organization.

From New York, therefore, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will attempt to ensure that there is no gap remaining between humanitarian assistance and political issues which may cause undue suffering to innocent human beings.

I will also make sure that the technical and operational part of emergency management will be carried out in Geneva, where the relief co-ordination and disaster mitigation activities of UNDRO will be strengthened in the framework of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. A major underlying objective will be to ensure that relief is delivered in a way that does not undermine future development efforts. Indeed many of the emergencies we are facing now are the result of serious development problems. Also, in order to ensure that all aspects of humanitarian assistance are taken care of and are well co-ordinated, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will work closely with all concerned organizations of the United Nations system and will rely on their operational capacity to deliver this necessary assistance to those who

services renforcés de l'UNDRO et les services d'autres organes spéciaux créés récemment pour faire face à des situations d'urgence particulières et complexes, afin de disposer d'une capacité de gestion des opérations d'urgence plus efficace et plus rationnelle. La coordination et la direction de la politique générale seront confiées au bureau de New York, qui s'attachera principalement aux domaines mal définis dans lesquels les questions humanitaires et politiques sont étroitement associées.

Comme il ressort de la résolution 46/182 et comme l'indiquent les événements survenus récemment dans le monde, l'ONU est de plus en plus souvent appelée non seulement à répondre aux demandes d'assistance humanitaire lors de situations d'urgence à caractère complexe ou de toute autre situation revêtant l'aspect d'une catastrophe, mais également à examiner la nature des obstacles à l'acheminement de l'aide afin d'en identifier les causes profondes et d'assumer la transition de la phase des secours à celle de la réhabilitation et du développement. Nous devons à tout prix, dans cet effort, veiller à ce que les populations touchées dans les zones de conflits aient accès, en toute sécurité, aux secours qui leur sont destinés. Les divers organes de l'ONU responsables des questions politiques, humanitaires, et de développement, doivent collaborer étroitement et intensifier leurs efforts communs en vue d'atteindre les principaux objectifs de l'Organisation.

C'est pourquoi, à partir de New York, le Département s'efforcera de faire en sorte qu'il n'y ait plus de décalage entre l'aide humanitaire et les questions politiques, afin d'éviter d'infliger des souffrances inutiles à des êtres humains innocents.

Je veillerai également à ce que les aspects techniques et opérationnels de la gestion des opérations d'urgence soient pris en charge à Genève, où le rôle de l'UNDRO en matière de coordination des secours et d'atténuation des effets des catastrophes sera renforcé dans le cadre du Département des affaires humanitaires. L'un des objectifs essentiels sera de faire en sorte que l'aide fournie ne nuise pas aux efforts futurs de développement. En effet, un grand nombre des situations d'urgence auxquelles nous sommes confrontés aujourd'hui sont le résultat de graves problèmes de développement. En outre, pour veiller à ce que tous les aspects de l'aide humanitaire soient pris en considération et faire en sorte que les activités soient pleinement coordonnées, le Département des affaires humanitaires agira en coopération étroite avec toutes les organisations intéressées du système des Nations Unies et fera appel à leur capacité opérationnelle pour apporter l'aide nécessaire aux populations qui en ont besoin. A

need it. Recommendations made by the General Assembly in resolution 46/182 for an improved United Nations system and international preparedness will be implemented in this context. Such measures will include the creation of an Inter-Agency Standing Committee; and of a central register of relief resources, personnel, supplies and equipment available within the United Nations system and from governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations that can be called upon at short notice by the United Nations.

The task ahead of us is challenging and difficult. However, since there are human lives and dignity at stake, we cannot afford to fail in our mission: I believe the dedicated team I have around me in DHA will ensure that we effectively contribute to save more lives and alleviate suffering around the world.

cet égard, les recommandations faites par l'Assemblée générale dans sa résolution 46/182 en vue d'une meilleure coordination du système de l'ONU et d'une meilleure planification préalable au niveau international seront appliquées. Les mesures prises dans ce sens consisteront notamment à créer un comité permanent interinstitutions et un fichier central des ressources, du personnel, des fournitures et du matériel disponibles au sein du système de l'ONU et auprès des gouvernements, organisations intergouvernementales et organisations non gouvernementales pouvant être mis à contribution par l'ONU.

Les tâches qui nous attendent sont exigeantes et difficiles. Toutefois, considérant que des vies humaines et que la dignité de l'être humain sont en jeu, nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre d'échouer dans notre mission. Je suis convaincu que, grâce à l'équipe dévouée qui m'entoure au sein du Département, nous contribuerons efficacement à sauvegarder des vies humaines et à alléger les souffrances dans le monde.

Biographical Note

Mr. Jan Eliasson was Sweden's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from March 1988 until March 1992. Concurrently, from 1988 to 1991, he was the Secretary-General's Personal Representative on issues relating to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 598 (1987), which concerns Iran-Iraq matters. Prior to that, from 1980 to 1986, he was attached to the United Nations mission to the Iran-Iraq conflict, when the late Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme, was the Secretary-General's Special Representative dealing with that conflict.

At the United Nations, Mr. Eliasson has also served as: Chairman of the General Assembly's working group on emergency relief (1991); Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (1991-1992); and Chairman of the United Nations Trust Fund for Southern Africa (1988).

Prior to his appointment as Sweden's Permanent Representative, Mr. Eliasson served, from 1983 to 1987, as Under-Secretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. During that same period, he was Secretary to the Swedish Foreign Policy Advisory Board. He also served as an expert of the Royal Swedish Defence Commission (1984-1986) and as Diplomatic Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (1982-1983).

In 1980, Mr. Eliasson was Head of the Swedish Liaison Office in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He also served at the Swedish Embassies in Washington, D.C. (1970-1974), as First Secretary; and in Bonn, Germany (1967-1970), as Second Secretary. He was a member of the Swedish delegation to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in Paris (1967).

Mr. Eliasson joined the foreign service in 1965 and held several positions at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including those of Deputy Under-Secretary for Asian and African Affairs (1980-1982); Director of the Press and Information Division (1977-1980); Executive Assistant to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1975-1977); and Head of Section in the Political Department (1974-1975).

He is a Director of the Board of the following organizations: the Institute for East-West Security Studies (New York); the International Peace Academy (New York); and the International Association of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations. He is also the Swedish member of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Born in Göteborg, Sweden, on 17 September 1940, Mr. Eliasson received a Master of Arts degree from the School of Economics, Göteborg, in 1965. He received his Swedish baccalaureate in 1960 and studied in Indiana, in the United States, from 1957 to 1958. From 1960 to 1962, he was a Reserve Officer at the Swedish Naval Academy.

Mr. Eliasson is married and has two daughters and a son.

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Editorials - A Retrospective

"During the past two decades natural disasters have cost the lives of some three million people, affected at least 800 million others, and in 1990 alone caused economic losses of US $47 billion." This summary in the Editorial of the September/October 1991 issue of *UNDRO News* indicates the scale of the global problem which UNDRO was created to tackle twenty years ago. The following glance at some of our Editorials highlights the recurring themes with which UNDRO has been involved during that period, points to the dangers which continue to exist, and suggests areas in which improvements, however partial, may be made.

A catalyst

UNDRO's task has been reiterated in the Editorials on many occasions, from that of acting as ***"a catalyst in mobilizing international relief aid for disaster victims across the world"*** (the first Editorial in the September/October 1983 issue), to doing full justice to the core of its mandate through the ***"co-ordination of response to disaster and other emergency situations"*** (the most recent, January/February 1992, issue).

The efforts made by the Office to alleviate the impact of disasters world-wide were summed up in the July/August 1985 Editorial: ***"UNDRO has, during the past 14 years, acted as a catalyst in mobilizing over 2 billion dollars worth of disaster relief assistance to 94 million victims in 84 countries ... [its] activities have not been confined to the essentially human field of co-ordinating relief aid for disaster victims. It has, over the years, extended technical assistance and expertise to disaster-prone nations to help them cope with calamities as and when they occur."***

Natural disasters

Inevitably, the devastation wrought by natural disasters has been the topic of most of the Editorials. For example, 1988 was one of the worst disaster years on record. The Editorial in September/October that year pointed out that of the 48 disasters in which UNDRO was involved during the first ten months, 38 were caused by unusual or exceptionally severe weather conditions. ***"Close to 50 million people were made homeless this summer as the worst floods in the history of Bangladesh devastated***

Natural disasters (the effect of a hurricane in the Dominican Republic 1979)

the country. In Sudan - more frequently affected by drought - another two million lost their homes to flood waters. Recently, the most devastating hurricane in the Western hemisphere this century raged through the Caribbean basin, leaving half a million homeless in Jamaica alone. In all, six countries in Africa, six in Asia and 13 in Latin America and the Caribbean have been hit by one or more floods or tropical cyclones."

A later Editorial underlined the importance of the co-ordination of relief efforts by pointing out that ***"unsolicited supplies can hamper rather than facilitate rescue and relief activities, by adding to the disarray which normally occurs in the immediate aftermath of a sudden disaster"***. It also emphasized the need for disaster relief and rescue teams ***"to be totally self-sufficient in order to be of immediate assistance when arriving in a disaster-stricken area"***. (November/December 1988). Further recommendations, in the July/August 1991 Editorial, were the ***"setting up of relief corridors to ease and quicken the transit of humanitarian assistance ... [and] the drawing up of sophisticated registers of those with expert knowledge of the delivery and management of emergency humanitarian relief"***.

Man-made disasters-environmental problems

Since its inception, UNDRO has been concerned with the damage caused by man-made as well as natural disasters. This concern has been reflected in the Editorials, e.g. the November/December 1986 issue which described the poisoning of the Rhine, through a toxic mixture of agrochemicals, which came less than two years after the chemical plant disaster at Bhopal, India, in which over 2,000 people died, and just eight months after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the then Soviet Union. The Editorial stressed ***"the ever growing need for stricter safety precautions in the production, transport, use and storage of hazardous materials and dangerous substances"***.

Associated Press Photo

Man-made disasters (the effects of the chemical plant disaster, Bophal, India, 1984)

The threat to the environment caused by man-made disasters was further echoed in the January/February 1989 Editorial: ***"The thinning of the ozone layer which protects us from the deadly radiation of the sun, the destruction of the rain forests which threatens to bring about dramatic and damaging changes in the world climate, the alarming accumulation of nuclear and poisonous industrial waste and the problems of its safe storage, the polluting exhaust fumes spewed out daily into the air we breathe by an estimated 500 million motor vehicles ... [all of these] man-made disasters are posing a new and perhaps equally deadly menace to our existence."***

Development

Another area of concern frequently raised in the Editorials, and interrelated with the environment, is that of development. For example, the description of Africa as a ***"continent in distress"***, in the Editorial of January/February 1984, was, sadly, still relevant six years later: ***"Alarm bells of an impending famine have already started ringing in as many as nine African countries and unless international help on a massive scale can be organized urgently, the year 1991 may well prove to be yet another year of large-scale starvation - and deaths for the continent. ... Years of civil conflicts, drought, population explosion and stagnant agricultural output have left the con-***

John Isaac/UN Photo

Africa, a continent in distress (the effect of drought in Ethiopia, 1984)

tinent heavily dependent on outside help." (November/December 1990). The African continent has been the focus of more Editorials than any other, and in many ways typifies UNDRO's activities in the field of natural and man-made disasters, and of the need to reduce their effects by prevention and preparedness.

Mitigation activities

For UNDRO's mandate does not only involve relief assistance. Mitigation is an equally important part of its mandate, stressed in the Editorial of November/December 1983, which revealed that between 1970 and 1981, natural disasters had killed an average of 8,000 people per month: ***"While some of these casualties could not have been avoided even with adequate preparedness, there is little doubt that many of the 1,131,963 people killed in natural disasters over that period would be alive today had there been effective preparedness/prevention plans in the disaster-hit region."***

Mitigation activities undertaken by UNDRO, *et al*, have had some positive effects, as was revealed in the September/October 1988 Editorial in its commentary on the major disasters which occurred that year in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Editorial pointed out that the death tolls from these disasters were low ***"by comparison with earlier disasters of a similar magnitude, especially when one considers the enormous increase in population density. This can be largely attributed to technological progress and improved early warning systems for meteorological disturbances".***

Yet another Editorial, in November/December 1989, discussed the importance of mitigation as indicated by the adoption by the General Assembly of guidelines for action in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The guidelines called, *inter alia*, for all Governments to take concrete measures at the national level by according adequate priority to disaster prevention and preparedness, to participate in international action using their scientific knowledge and technical know-how and to invest resources in the programme of the Decade. ***"Invest - not simply donate - because it is a better investment to prevent and prepare for natural disasters and thus reduce their impact than to spend on extended relief, in any case only a partial remedy,"*** the Editorial counselled.

Many problems remain to be tackled within the broad field of disaster management. We in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDRO are determined to continue the herculean task this implies, together with our partners in this endeavour. As we do so, perhaps it would be as well to remind ourselves of what is often ignored by critics of the United Nations: ***"What they tend to forget is that the UN is no more than a mirror of the world today, with all its tensions, dissensions, and disputes reflected in the General Assembly discussions and debates."*** (July/August 1985). ***"International organizations, by and large, tend to reflect the reality of the world we live in. It is unfair - and unrealistic - to expect such bodies to function differently from the realities of international politics."*** (May/June 1991).

Let us accept such statements as both reminders of the difficulty of our task, and signposts to the need for improved co-operation and co-ordination.

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UNDRO News - Some Facts and Figures

■ **UNDRO Newsletter/ Bulletin d'information**

The precursor of the current journal was the *UNDRO Newsletter/Bulletin d' information*, which first appeared in August 1976. It was produced three times each year - in January, May and September - until the last issue in September 1979.

The aim of the *Newsletter* was to "contribute to further improving the co-ordination and mobilization of international emergency relief assistance and promoting the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters" - an aim which has been strengthened and widened by *UNDRO News* over the years.

The average length of the *Newsletter* was eight pages, including photographs; it was prepared in UNDRO, and was reproduced in the Palais des Nations.

■ **UNDRO Monthly**

The year after the *Newsletter* first appeared, we began issuing *UNDRO Monthly*, (from March 1977) a report consisting of short notes summarizing "current disaster situations and developments of interest to those concerned with disaster matters". Like the *Newsletter*, the average length of the *Monthly* was eight pages, it was produced, on a stencil machine, in the Office.

The two "Journals" ran in tandem until they both ceased publication in January 1980, when an announcement in the *Monthly* informed readers that - with the intention of improving UNDRO's public information material, and making it both more attractive and useful to the reader - it had been decided to introduce *UNDRO News*, a bi-monthly journal from March 1980. Again, this intention has been followed, and broadened, by *UNDRO News*.

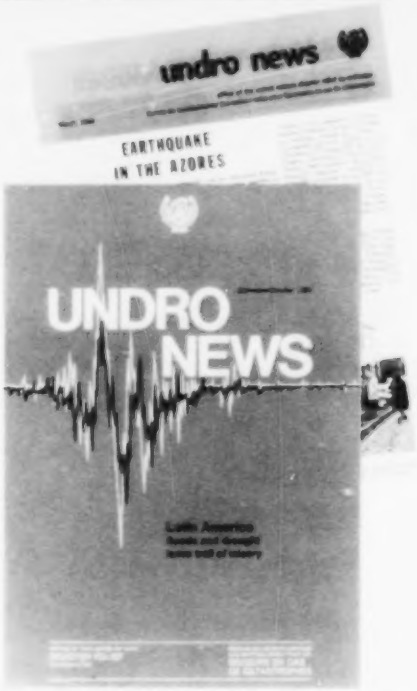
■ **UNDRO News**

UNDRO News itself has had three different covers: the first issue, in March 1980, was similar in format and design to the *Newsletter*, although its length evolved over the years until by the beginning of 1985, the average number of pages was 18; the size of the journal has risen consistently and in recent years has reached 28 pages.

The September/October 1983 issue introduced both a new front cover and the first Editorial (written in English but thereafter produced in both English and French).

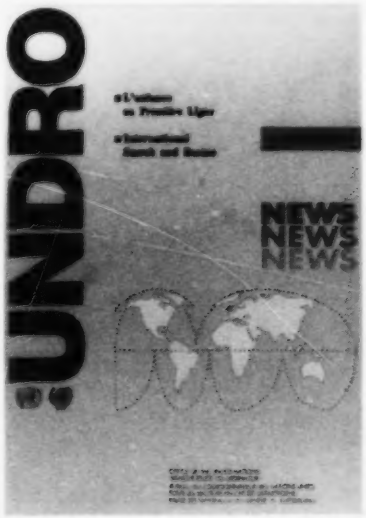
The section on "UNDRO at Work", informing the reader of the activities of the Office, first appeared in the July/August 1984 issue.

We have striven to improve the layout and design of the journal since the January/February 1989 issue



when we acquired Desktop publishing facilities. Since its inception *UNDRO News* has been printed by the Reproduction Section within the Palais des Nations.

The latest change to the journal occurred with the redesigned front cover, for the January/February 1992 issue, to mark twenty years of UNDRO activities. The current issue contains both our new designation (Department of Humanitarian Affairs/Département des Affaires Humanitaires) and our old title. Future issues will only contain our new title. ■



UNDRO's Mandate: A Survey

Twenty years ago, the General Assembly took action to strengthen and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community, and particularly the United Nations system, in the field of international disaster assistance. It created the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co- ordinator, UNDRO, on 14 December 1971, as the sole United Nations Office whose mandate related exclusively to disaster management. UNDRO's main functions, as defined in its founding resolution (General Assembly Resolution 2816), are to mobilize and co-ordinate disaster relief assistance and promote activities related to disaster mitigation, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning technological developments. We highlight below aspects of the most important resolutions indicating the evolution of UNDRO's role in responding to natural disasters and other disaster situations.

Between 1971 and 1992, many resolutions reaffirmed the mandate of the Office and reiterated the need to further strengthen it in order to "**attain an effective co-ordination system of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance**" on a world-wide basis.

Resolution 3243
- 29 November 1974

This Resolution called upon the Secretary-General to provide sufficient staff, equipment and facilities to strengthen the capacity of UNDRO "**to provide an efficient and effective world-wide service of mobilizing and co-ordinating relief, including in particular the collection and dissemination of information on disaster assessment**". It decided that the "**additional costs of providing this strengthened capability should be met by voluntary contributions**", through the setting up of a Trust Fund.

Resolution 3440
- 9 December 1975
Resolution 3532
- 17 December 1975

The Trust Fund was expanded in Resolution 3440 which further invited "**all States to make voluntary contributions to encourage the setting up of national fund-raising committees to promote voluntary contributions for disaster-related activities, bearing in mind the co-ordinating role of the Office**". Under Resolution 3532 these voluntary funds were to be divided into two sub-accounts with separate target figures for the biennium 1976-1977 of US $400,000, to augment the funds available under the regular budget for emergency assistance, and US $600,000 for programme costs of technical assistance to governments. The same Resolution authorized the Secretary-General to "**increase progressively up to a ceiling of US $30,000 the amount of emergency assistance per country, for any one disaster.**"

Resolution 34/55
- 29 November 1979

Four years later, the General Assembly reaffirmed the central role of the Office in mobilizing, directing and co-ordinating international disaster relief assistance, and recognized the detrimental effects of natural disasters on the development programmes of developing countries. It stated that the funds provided in the regular budget of the UN for the Office were "**now inadequate to respond to requests for assistance from disaster afflicted countries**". To enable the Office to

The specific mention of "complex" disasters or of "emergencies of exceptional magnitude" as part of UNDRO's mandate appears for the first time in Resolution 36/225, adding to that of "natural disasters and other disaster situations".

A Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) was launched in July 1990 following an Inter-Agency Task Force endorsed by the 43th Session of the General Assembly in 1988 which in Resolution 43/204, recommended, *inter alia*, the upgrading of the professional skills in disaster management through joint training programmes under the joint management of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNDRO.

respond to "**at least twelve requests for emergency disaster assistance in any one year, with a normal ceiling of US $30,000 per country**", it requested that additional funds be provided in the regular budget of the Office for the biennium 1980-81.

Resolution 35/107
- 5 December 1980

In this Resolution the General Assembly stressed "**the major importance, for the execution of the Office's mandate, of the timely receipt of distribution and information on the responses of donors as well as on the nature and extent of the current and intended contributions by governments and international organizations to disaster stricken countries**". Reaffirming the necessity to ensure "**a continued sound financial basis for the Office**", it decided to maintain for a further two-year period, from January 1982, the Trust Fund established in accordance with resolution 3243.

Resolution 36/225
- 17 December 1981

Ten years after the creation of the Office, the General Assembly reaffirmed UNDRO's mandate as the focal point of the UN system for disaster relief co-ordination, called for the strengthening and improvement of its capacity and effectiveness and stressed the need to "**take full advantage of information provided by existing early warning monitoring systems and to co-ordinate all the relevant early warning systems**". The General Assembly further underlined the importance of the management of information as one of the main tools of co-ordination in emergency relief assistance.

The same Resolution, decided *inter alia*, that, following a request for disaster relief from a disaster stricken state, "**and whenever required to deal with complex emergencies of exceptional magnitude**", the Secretary-General should convene meetings of the concerned organizations of the UN system "**in order to develop a concerted relief programme and conduct ad hoc consultations with the heads or representatives of the agencies concerned with disaster relief questions, with a view to ensuring speedy and efficient delivery of goods to the disaster stricken areas... all agencies with responsibilities for natural disasters and other disaster situations should be involved at the appropriate level in such consultations**".

Resolution 37/144
- 17 December 1982

In December 1981, the General Assembly had reaffirmed UNDRO's central co-ordinating role in managing the various types of disasters. In December 1982 the General Assembly moved a step further by, in resolution 37/144, calling upon the Secretary-General "**to develop concerted relief programmes as a basis for united appeals**" to be launched by UNDRO on his behalf. UNDRO is thus empowered to mobilize and co-ordinate not only UN assistance (as in its founding resolution 2816) but also assistance from any quarter, when needed. Under the same resolution, the General Assembly also decided to make UNDRO's Trust Fund permanent. It simultaneously authorized an increase in the budget for direct emergency grants when it requested the Secretary-General "**to raise the maximum of US $30,000 to $50,000, the additional $20,000 to come from voluntary sources**". This would permit UNDRO to respond to requests for emergency disaster assistance "**up to a total of US $600,000 in any one year, with a normal ceiling of US $50,000 in the case of any one disaster**". Despite strict budgetary restraints, the Assembly also voted for an expansion of UNDRO staff, in recognition of the increased workload due to the Office's wider responsibilities.

Resolution 39/207
- 17 December 1984

This Resolution reaffirmed UNDRO's mandate "**as the focal point**

of the UN system for disaster relief co-ordination" as well as the primary importance of inter-agency assessment missions organized by UNDRO. The resolution is based on specific proposals contained in the special report of the Secretary-General on "**Strengthening the capacity of the UN system to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations**", which was the result of three years of work and consultations with governments and interested organizations dealing with disaster situations.

The Resolution also stressed, yet again, the importance of information as one of the essential elements for the fulfillment of UNDRO's mandate as the focal point of the United Nations system for disaster relief co-ordination, and emphasized the importance of improving the flow and quality of information during disaster relief operations.

Resolution 41/201
- 8 December 1986

The General Assembly noted that the number of disasters to which the United Nations was called upon to respond had increased from twelve in 1980 to fifty-three in 1985. It underlined the distinct character of immediate humanitarian emergency response and longer-term development assistance and emphasized again "**the need to respond to these in a co-ordinated manner**".

Resolution 43/131
- 8 December 1988

The General Assembly underlined the problem of the mass displacement of populations resulting from disasters and the need to facilitate access to victims in order to enhance the speed of assistance.

Resolution 45/100
- 14 December 1990

The General Assembly, referring to Resolution 43/131, noted the possibility of "**establishing, on a temporary basis, where needed, and by means of concerted action... relief corridors for the distribution of emergency medical and food aid**".

Resolution 45/221
- 21 December 1990

The General Assembly in this resolution reaffirmed UNDRO's role as the focal point within the UN system for matters related to disaster relief and disaster mitigation. It called for the strengthening of UNDRO having noted the constraints and difficulties facing the Office in the discharge of its mandate, and taking into account its experience acquired in the Persian Gulf. It also recognized the importance for the Office to be in a position to immediately provide small emergency grants, while also underlining "**the flexibility necessary to address specific needs created by sudden disaster situations**".

Resolution 46/182
- 19 December 1991

In December last year, the General Assembly adopted the above resolution on the "**Strengthening of the co-ordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations**". In particular, it noted that "**inadequacy of resources has been one of the major constraints in the effective response of the United Nations to emergencies**". It stressed the need to strengthen the leadership role of the Secretary-General to ensure "**better preparation for, as well as rapid and coherent response to, natural disasters and other emergencies. This should be achieved through co-ordinated support for prevention and preparedness measures and the optimal utilization of, *inter alia*, an inter-agency standing committee, consolidated appeals, a central emergency revolving fund and a register of stand-by capacities**". To this end, a high-level official, emergency relief co-ordinator, would be designated who would "**combine the functions at present carried out in the co-ordination of the United Nations response by representatives of the Secretary-General for major and complex emergencies, as well as by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator.**"

The High-level official should be supported by a secretariat based on a strengthened UNDRO and the consolidation of existing offices that deal with complex emergencies. ■

An International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), beginning on 1 January 1990, was launched by the United Nations, following the adoption of Resolution 44/236 (22 December 1989). The Decade is intended to reduce, through concerted international action, especially in developing countries, loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. To support the activities of the Decade, a Secretariat was established at the UN Office in Geneva, in close association with UNDRO.

Earthquake in Turkey - thousands homeless

Disaster strikes

On the evening of Friday, 13 March 1992 many of the residents of the city of Erzincan, in eastern Turkey, were finishing the evening meal with which Moslems break their daytime fast in the month of Ramadan. Suddenly, a thirty-second tremor shook the city and surrounding villages, bringing devastation in its wake.

Panic-stricken people poured into the dark, rubble-strewn streets in the aftermath of the earthquake, which registered 6.8 on the Richter scale. Hours later, the survivors still huddled outside under blankets, wary of re-entering buildings, despite sub-zero temperatures of 20 degrees Celsius. Rescuers toiled through the night in the freezing cold, their only illumination the headlights of cars, as they clawed at the debris in a desperate search for survivors.

Unfortunately, such scenes are not unknown in a country straddling the frequently-active 1,000 km-long North Anatolian fault zone, which cuts across the northern part of Turkey. For although the earthquake produced the fiercest shock in 50 years, the country has experienced over 30 other serious disasters in this century alone. For the people of Erzincan, in particular, the latest event revived memories of the worst of these disasters, in 1939, when the entire city was destroyed by an earthquake of 7.9 magnitude (some 50 times the energy of the 1992 quake), which killed 30,000 people, half of the existing population.

The memory of this earlier earthquake increased the fears of those living in Erzincan; for most of the inhabitants believed, contrary to scientific evidence, that the March 1992 event was a precursor to an imminent and even greater cataclysm. Consequently, virtually the entire population of some 100,000 people in the city, and some 80,000 people in the nearby villages, refused to return to their homes, even those left untouched by the earthquake, and chose to sleep outdoors, preferring to take health risks in the sub-zero cold which were greater than the risk of a further earthquake.

J.Tomblin/UNDRO Photo

The ground-floor of this former 4-storey building, on the outskirts of Erzincan, collapsed, mainly due to lack of shear walls.

The latest earthquake ruptured a segment of the fault zone 80 kms in length (and was followed by a series of over 30 aftershocks, the severest, two days later and measuring 5.8, ruptured a further 30 kms segment along the fault). Its epicentre was about 40 kms east of Erzincan, the

Disaster relief teams in the streets of Erzincan hours after the earthquake struck.

O. Almgren/
UNDRO Photo

provincial capital, which is situated on a main branch of the Upper Euphrates River, and some 560 kms east of Ankara, Turkey's capital.

The death toll, originally feared to rise as high as 4,000 was 547, with over 2,000 injured (680 severely). Nearly five thousand buildings were destroyed or damaged beyond repair, with a further 13,500 structures suffering light to moderate damage, i.e. nearly 20% of the buildings in the city itself, particularly the modern high-rise structures, and nearly 40% of the mud-block, earth-roofed houses in the surrounding villages.

The response to the disaster

Both the President, Turgul Ozal, and the Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, flew to the disaster area shortly after the earthquake struck. The national authority in charge of the co-ordination of relief activities was the Ministry of Public Works and Settlements, with the Turkish Red Crescent and civil and military authorities assisting in the rescue operations. The efforts of these people, aided by the international community, were such that by Sunday, 15 March the Foreign Ministry was advising the outside world that no additional search and rescue or medical teams were needed. Although a few survivors were still being dug out of the rubble, there were sufficient hospital and medical services available, including 100 doctors and 500 nurses, working in the six hospitals which were still functioning in the area. Close co-operation was established between the Turkish authorities and all other agencies, including the UN, working in the area.

Massive relief resources from all parts of the country were dispatched to the disaster-stricken area by the Turkish authorities. These resources were supplemented by goods donated by the international community. In addition, disaster relief teams were sent to the area by several countries and organizations.

The Erzincan earthquake was the first major disaster since UNDRO's incorporation into the newly-established Department of Humanitarian Affairs. From Geneva, DHA-UNDRO immediately sent three delegates to the country; two, experienced in search and rescue and transport logistics, went to Erzincan to assess unmet relief needs on the ground, and co-ordinate international activities on-site. This emergency underlined the need for the continuation of a programme already initiated by DHA-UNDRO to strengthen such operational co-ordination. *(See the article in the January/February 1992 issue of*

UNDRO News, entitled "The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group" (INSARAG), pp. 8-11.)

The third delegate, a mitigation technology expert, went to Ankara to co-ordinate, with the UNDP resident representative, response activities in the capital, where co-ordination between the international agency representatives was quickly achieved, with representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO co-operating closely. A UN Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT) meeting was quickly arranged, attended by 11 agencies including all those of the UN system present in Ankara, plus the World Bank and the European Community. Information was shared on relief needs assessment, and on goods or services supplied or available. A donors meeting followed, attended by the Turkish Red Crescent Director and members of the UN-DMT. Total contributions report to DHA-UNDRO amounted to US $10 million.

The following lessons, learned from the Erzincan earthquake, should be included in mitigation measures for similar earthquake-risk areas:

■ A faster survey of loss and relief needs should be made of all disaster-stricken areas. A team of 10 or more national assessors should be trained in appropriate survey methods and provision made for their rapid deployment after a disaster occurs.

■ It is essential that a systematic effort be made to inform the public of the characteristics of large earthquakes, their aftershocks, and related risks, to dispel the unwarranted fear that a greater earthquake will inevitably follow the initial quake.

■ Deficiencies in building construction should be corrected, particularly in low-cost housing where local materials and traditional design often mean that simple structures have no inherent resistance to strong earthquakes. For example, in Erzincan, where mud-block walls were built within a simple wooden frame, the incorporation of a ring-beam at or close to the roof line meant that building collapse was either prevented or limited to a non-lethal level.

O. Almgren/UNDRO Photo

Part of a collapsed school in Erzincan, showing the dormitory accommodation

The following measures are already underway at the international level to further develop co-ordination mechanisms for international relief activities:

■ **On-site co-ordination.** It is vital to provide a mechanism to assist the local emergency management authorities in on-site co-ordination of international resources, as well as to ensure the most effective use of such resources. In emergencies of the scale of the Erzincan earthquake, few countries have sufficient resources to enable them to effectively manage their own large-scale national relief operations as well as the often overwhelming response from the international community. DHA-UNDRO is developing an On-Site Operations Co-ordination Centre concept to target this function, under the auspices of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).

■ In view of the importance of on-site co-ordination in ensuring a cost-effective and appropriate use of international resources, provision should be made in appeals, or from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), to facilitate the transportation of specialized UN staff to and from the disaster area as well as in and around the area itself.

■

UNDRO at Work

1 March - 15 April 1992

Relief: Mobilization and Co-ordination

■ **Bolivia - Floods:** In mid-March, floods affected Northern Bolivia. 50 people were reported injured, approximately 5,000 made homeless, 1,025 houses were damaged and 80 per cent of crops lost. UNDRO launched an appeal for international assistance, made an emergency cash contribution of US $20,000, and issued two Situation Reports.

■ **Costa Rica - Earthquake:** An Information Report was issued on 7 March by UNDRO, following an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.0 on the Richter scale which occurred the previous day, 50 km northwest of San José. No casualties or damage were reported.

■ **Cuba - Floods:** UNDRO pledged a US $25,000 emergency grant and on 27 March issued the third and last Situation Report on this emergency. Plans were underway for the use of a contribution, made through UNDRO, of US $241,000 from the Italian Government, for the purchase of relief supplies.

■ **Ecuador - Floods:** On 24 March the equatorial coast of Ecuador was extensively flooded, following torrential rains caused by the El Niño current. Initial reports indicated 13 dead, 10,000 homeless and widespread damage to agriculture. The Government requested UNDRO to issue an appeal for international assistance (Situation Report No. 2 of 31 March). UNDRO provided an emergency grant of US $20,000 for the purchase of immediate relief goods, including food, medicines, blankets, tents and water purifiers.

■ **Gulf Crisis:** An UNDRO delegate undertook a mission to New York in early March to brief senior officials of several UN Departments concerned on the recent developments in the region, following his return, in late February, from Iraq where he was adviser to the UN Assistant Secretary-General for the Humanitarian Programme.

■ **Lebanon - Snowstorms:** The emergency phase is over but the Lebanese Government and humanitarian organizations are still assisting victims of the February snowstorms. As at mid-March, donations received in response to UNDRO's appeal amounted to US $1.16 million. Of this total, US $80,000 were channeled through UNDRO by the Austrian and Australian Governments. Four Situation Reports had been issued by 6 March and an emergency allocation of US $20,000 made, for the immediate local purchase of food and other relief goods.

■ **Nicaragua - Volcanic Eruption:** Cerro Negro volcano, some 25 kms off the Northwestern provincial capital of Leon, began erupting at 11.30 p.m. local time on 9 April. Up to 7,000 people were evacuated. UNDRO was immediately alerted by the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative in Managua and issued an information report. After a request, by the Government, for international assistance, four Situation Reports were issued. An emergency grant of US $30,000 was approved by UNDRO. Arrangements for an inter-agency mission are underway, to be led by UNDRO/UNDP and consisting of ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America) and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), in order to assist the authorities to evaluate the damage, the impact on the national economy and the medium and long-term consequences.

■ **Somalia - Displaced:** In response to the intensive relief operation of the UN for Somalian displaced persons and refugees, the Government of Japan decided to donate relief goods from their stock in UNDRO's Pisa warehouse. UNDRO, in consultation with UNHCR, organized an airlift on 1 April of 2,000 blankets, 20 plastic sheets and 50 family tents to Nairobi, Kenya. Total operations cost was valued at over US $150,000.

■ **Vanuatu - Cyclone:** Two Information Reports were issued by UNDRO as at 11 March, following cyclone "Fran" which struck the islands on 9 March, Latest reports indicate a total of 230 buildings damaged. No request for international assistance was made to UNDRO who monitored the situation through its South Pacific Project Office (SPPO) located at Suva, Fiji.

The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative (E. McCain) on an assessment mission to one of the affected villages in the province.

■ **Turkey - Erzincan earthquake:** On 13 March, an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck the region of Erzincan in Turkey. The quake caused severe damage, 547 deaths and over 2,000 injured. Three UNDRO delegates reached Turkey shortly after the disaster. Two flew to Erzincan with the Swiss Disaster Relief Unit, while the mission leader went to Ankara to assist in the efforts of the Government and the UN Resident Co-ordinator. UNDRO issued nine Situation Reports and recorded contributions of over US $10 million.

The three UNDRO delegates who went to Turkey, following the Erzincan earthquake (from left to right) J. Tomblin, O. Almgren, B. Larner are pictured above with the UNDP/ UNDRO Resident Representative in Ankara.

■ Three airlift operations were carried out from UNDRO's Pisa warehouse. Thanks to contributions from Finland, Italy, Japan, and the Republic of San Marino. Two of the airlifts were made in a Belgian Air Force aircraft. A total of over 60 tons of relief goods arrived in Erzincan for distribution to the survivors of the earthquake.

Disaster Mitigation

■ **OAU Regional Meeting:** UNDRO participated in the organization of the Regional Meeting on Disasters in Africa, sponsored by the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and held in Addis Ababa from 13-17 April. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss systematic actions which might be taken to reduce the adverse effects on economic and social development in the OAU member countries, of natural, technological and environmental hazards, and to propose ways of taking such hazards into account in the development process.

■ **IDNDR/STC Meeting:** The Disaster Mitigation Branch (DMB) was represented at the Third Session of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting, which was held in Geneva from 16-20 March *(See article, page 23)*. The meeting discussed, *inter alia*, progress in national and international IDNDR programmes and projects, as well as plans for strengthening and building national capacities in disaster mitigation.

■ **International Programme on the Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident (IPHECA):** A representative of the DMB attended a meeting of the IPHECA held at the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, from 24-26 March. The meeting reviewed the current status and future plans of the several pilot projects initiated by WHO under IPHECA to ameliorate the health effects of the Chernobyl nuclear accident of April 1986. In addition to staff of WHO and other competent UN organizations and representatives of the Council of Europe and selected governments, the meeting was also attended by representatives of the health sectors of the three former Soviet Republics directly affected by the accident (Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia).

■ **Caribbean Disaster Management Programme (CDMP):** UNDRO organized, in St. Maartens in April, a meeting of government officials of the Caribbean countries to discuss plans for the proposed CDMP, a follow-on to the PCDPPP which was completed at the end of 1990.

■ **Inter-Agency Committee on Nuclear Accidents:** An officer of the DMB attended the Regular Meeting of the Inter-Agency Committe for Response and Preparedness to Nuclear Accidents, to take part in the drafting of the guidelines on "Objectives and Procedures for Inter-Agency Co-ordination in the Case of Nuclear Accidents", held in Vienna from 2-4 March.

■ **Egypt/Development of Disaster Preparedness, Prevention and Management Planning:** The UNDRO officer in charge of the project met with local officials in Cairo in March to review progress in project implementation during 1991, and to participate in a meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss 1992 project activities.

■ **Nicaragua:** The Chief of the Disaster Mitigation Branch, an experienced vulcanologist, was sent to Nicaragua to investigate the unusual volume of gas emanating from the Cerro Negro volcano following its eruption in April.

Information, Communications, Exchange of Views and Contacts

■ **Council of Europe:** The Chief of the Relief Co-ordination Branch participated in a meeting organized by the Council of Europe which took place in Paris on 25 - 26 March. Among other items, the permanent correspondants of the Open Partial Agreement on Major Disasters reviewed the relief operations undertaken following the Erzincan earthquake.

■ **Informal meeting of the INSARAG Steering Group:** A first informal meeting of the steering group of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was convened in Geneva between 7 and 8 April. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of Germany, Japan, Switzerland, USA and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), discussed experiences acquired from the recent earthquake in Erzincan, Turkey, as well as initiatives taken by UNDRO in the field of operational co-ordination and the future work programme of INSARAG, its regional groups and interregional working groups.

■ **Project on Stockpiles of Disaster Relief items available for International Assistance:** UNDRO initiated work on this Project in February, pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolution 46/182 dated 19 December 1991, and to the earlier recommendations of the NERS IV Meeting and of the Consultative Meeting on UNDRO/ NGO Co-operation.

The initial purpose is to establish a register of existing stockpiles which will provide UNDRO and other parties involved in disaster relief operations with information relevant to these activities.

In line with NERS IV recommendations, UNDRO plans to conduct a workshop for organizations operating stockpiles or otherwise involved in disaster relief operations. The purpose of the workshop will be to exchange experience in stockpile management and to discuss how to disseminate the information provided for the register.

■ **UNDRO/UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme:** As part of the programme, six UNDRO delegates took part in a "Train-the-Trainers" course which was held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (USA), from 17 to 28 March.

❑ An officer of the Disaster Mitigation Branch participated as a resource person in a training course given in April in the Dominican Republic as part of the UNDRO/ UNDP DMTP.

■ In April, an UNDRO delegate undertook a mission to the USA and the United Kingdom to discuss aspects of a programme of Operational Co-ordination initiated by UNDRO. The mission included visits to the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) as well as discussions with various UN offices and the Disaster Management Training Centre at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

■ **Visitors to UNDRO Headquarters between 1 March and 15 April included:**

Mr. J. Dahl-Hansen, Head of Department, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and Mr. M. Sondergaard, Head of Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen; Mr. J. Noble, Director General for International Organizations, MFA, Canada; Mr. L. Myhlback, Director General, Swedish National Rescue Services Board; Mr. J. Widgren, Co-ordinator, Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia, UNHCR; Mr. J. Collymore, Regional Co-ordinator, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA); Mr. J. Manent, Ministre Conseiller, Permanent Mission of France to the UNOG; Mgr. C. Pierre, Chargé d'affaires, Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the UNOG; Mr. D. Pressley, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the USA to the UNOG; Mr. S. Haouas, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the UNOG; and Mr. L. Strackan, Consultant, CIDA, Canada. ■

Erratum - Dans l'article que nous avons consacré à "L'enfance en première ligne", publié dans notre dernier numéro (UNDRO News, January/February 1992) nous avons fait référence au témoignage d'une ONG internationale spécialisée dans la défense des droits des enfants. Il s'agit de "Defence for Children International" dont le nom en français est "Défense des Enfants - International" (DEI) et non "Défense Internationale des Enfants" (DIE). Tout en réitérant au Secrétaire général de D.E.I. nos remerciements pour l'intérêt qu'il a manifesté à l'égard d'UNDRO News et de notre article sur les enfants victimes des catastrophes naturelles et des conflits, nous lui donnons bien volontiers acte pour son aimable mise au point.

A personal note from the Director

As UNDRO's twentieth anniversary is being remembered I am preparing to leave the Office to take up a new and challenging assignment in Vienna.

Disaster management is a fascinating field and demands a methodical approach. It is limited in scope and yet reaches into fundamental questions of economic and social development. One must be careful to isolate problems so that they can be addressed specifically, and yet they can only successfully be tackled in a logical continuum of related steps. Most of all, disaster management is concrete and result-oriented and very directly affects human beings.

It was, however, the management responsibility for a small staff of sixty which was perhaps the most interesting part of my task. Work was tremendously satisfying during these past two years in which we jointly took a number of important initiatives, had many highly instructive discussions among ourselves, and charted a way into the future. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues, both inside and outside the Office, who have worked with me for the progress of UNDRO. It has been a very stimulating and enriching time, both professionally and personally.

What we did together has prepared UNDRO well for the important changes that are about to happen in the wake of General Assembly Resolution A/46/182. A Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) has been established within which UNDRO's functions will be redefined and expanded. The strong political will and interest in emergency/disaster management that was apparent in the General Assembly's debate now provides a unique opportunity to translate into reality the concepts and proposals developed or reformulated at UNDRO in recent years, and drawn from two decades of experience.

My warmest wishes go to my colleagues at DHA-UNDRO, with their new Under-Secretary-General and new Director, for success and satisfaction in the performance of their exciting task.

F. Mayrhofer-Grünbühel

Conference

International Workshop on Flood Mitigation and Disaster Preparedness Hanoi, Viet Nam, 22-24 June 1992

The Workshop aims at gathering high ranking government officials, representatives from international organizations and internationally recognized specialists within flood prevention, flood warning and forecasting to prepare a global framework for disaster management in general and for flood mitigation in particular for Viet Nam.

It is organized jointly by the Ministry of Water Resources of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, UNDP, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development, and DHA-UNDRO. Individuals and organizations interested in attending the workshop are encouraged to confirm their participation as early as possible, either by facsimile or telex to: Mr. David Smith,
Resident Representative,
United Nations Development Programme,
27-29 Pahn Boi Chau,
Hanoi, Viet Nam.
Tel.: 257495, Fax.: 84-42-59267,
Telex: 411417 UNDP VT.

DMTP

A Catalyst for the Global Development of Disaster Management Training

The Disaster Management Training Programme was initially conceived as a response to a 1987 General Assembly request to UNDRO and UNDP to examine ways and means to improve the capacity of both organizations in the areas of disaster mitigation and response. The three-year Programme was launched on 1 July 1990, shortly after the Secretary-General promulgated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Not surprisingly, the Scientific and Technical Committee established by the IDNDR unanimously chose the DMTP as a demonstration project of the Decade. The summary below is a follow-up to "Disaster Management Training in the '90s - a global strategy", which appeared in the September/October 1990 issue of ***UNDRO News.***

Despite the stark increase in loss of life and economic damage arising from both natural and man-made disasters, the international community has not always been able to benefit from the lessons learned in disaster management. This has not been through lack of expertise, but rather from an inability to transmit hard-won experience to people who need it - those affected by disasters or involved in emergency situations.

The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) is a significant answer to this perennial problem. The principal objective of this ambitious global endeavour is to promote the issue of disaster response and reduction in the sixty most disaster-prone countries of the developing world. It provides a structured training programme through which countries, institutions and individuals acquire the means to conduct disaster training themselves. It also provides training directly through disaster simulation exercises, and acts as a catalyst for further endeavours in the reduction of the impact of disasters.

❒ Who is being trained?

During the course of the Programme (from July 1990 to July 1994) nearly 2,000 people currently working on disaster management in disaster-prone countries will receive training of one to three weeks duration. These trainees will include government personnel, staff from the UN system working in the field, and national officials of both bilateral donors and the NGO community. A further 1,400 people will attend short, one to two-day, courses on the link between disasters and the development process, and on the essential guidelines in the field of disaster mitigation and response. Indirectly such training will be passed to other sectors within a given country, such as community-based groups, concerned ministry officials, local leaders, members of the Civil Defence and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. Indeed, in the long run the greatest number of people will be trained by this indirect impact of the Programme.

The DMTP resources and training audiences extend far beyond those of UNDRO and UNDP, whose staff represent only a portion of the concerned actors in the disaster environment. Within the United Nations system, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and WHO are contributing to the development of training materials, and providing staff trainers. The country representatives of these organizations also feature prominently in the training audiences. Within the field of disaster management, a selected number of training and research institutions, outside the UN system, have agreed to provide technical assistance in the design and production of training materials and in the *train-the-trainers* project. Government officials and other nationals of disaster-prone countries will be strongly represented as both resource persons and trainees.

List of Materials as at April 1992

The Foundation Module: **An Overview of Disaster Management** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (English /Spanish).
Prepared by the University of Wisconsin Disaster Management Center.

Special Module: **Vulnerability and Risk Assessment** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (E).
Prepared by A.W. Coburn, R.J.S. Spence, A. Pomonis, Cambridge. Architectural Research Limited.

Special Module: **Disaster Mitigation** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (E).
Prepared by A.W. Coburn, R.J.S. Spence, A. Pomonis.

Special Module: **Disasters and Development** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (E).
Prepared by R.S. Stephenson, Ph.D.

Special Module: **Disaster Assessment** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (E).
Prepared by R.S. Stephenson, PH.D.

Special Module: **Civil Conflict and Population Displacement** (and its **Trainer's Guide** (E).
Prepared by Frederick Cuny, Intertect Training Services.

Special Module: **Disaster Preparedness** (and its **Trainer's Guide**) (E).
Prepared by Randolph Kent, UNDP.

The following eight additional special modules (and their **trainer's guides**) in draft form are being finalized:

- **Information Management and Communications** (E).
  Prepared by Giles Whitcomb.
- **Disasters and the Environment** (E).
  Prepared by Gustavo Wilches-Chaux.
- **International Law in Emergencies** (E).
  Prepared by Jiri Toman, Henry Dunant Institute.
- **Drought and Famine** (E).
  Prepared by Nigel Nicholds, ODI.
- **Rehabilitation and Reconstruction** (E).
  Prepared by Yasemin F. Aysan and Ian R. Davis.
- **Introduction to Hazards** (E).
  Prepared by Sheila Reed, Intertect Training Services.
- **Disaster Economics** (E).
  Prepared by Ross Bull, Public Finance Management.
- **Logistics** (E).

The UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Manual (E).
Prepared by Ron Ockwell and Giles Whitcomb.

The Trainer's Guide to Disaster Management Training (E).
Prepared by Ian R. Davis and Yasemin F. Aysan, Disaster Management Centre, Oxford Polytechnic.

National Training Development Module (E).
Prepared by Yasemin F. Aysan and Ian R. Davis.

Disaster Mitigation Simulation Exercise (E).
Prepared by Ian R. Davis and Andrew Maskrey.

Guidelines for the Preparation of Case Studies (E).
Prepared by R.S. Stephenson, PH.D.

Case Study on **Severe Tropical Storms: Preparation and Response** (E).
Prepared by R.S. Stephenson, PH.D.

Desk Study on **The Needs of Women and Children in Emergency Situations** (E).
Prepared by J. Mocellin, D. Motsisi, R. Wiest, Disaster Research Unit, University of Manitoba.

Videos: (i) Disaster Mitigation (16 min.) (E/F/S). - (ii) UN Response to Disaster (14 min.) (E/F/S).

Copies of the publications may be obtained from: **Disaster Management Centre, University of Wisconsin, 432 North Lake Street, Madison, Wis., 53706, USA.**

Box A

❒ Training Modalities

The core of the Programme is the Country Workshop, an 8-day event tailored to the needs and hosted by the government of individual disaster-prone countries.

The fulcrum of the Workshop is the United Nations Disaster Management Team in tandem with a national disaster focal point body, liaising with civil defence organizations, key government ministries, Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, other NGOs, and appointed representatives of the population at large.

Prior to the Country Workshops in a given region, a Regional Workshop will be held for UNDP/UNDRO deputy resident representatives and national officers designated as the disaster focal points; the former will receive one week's training, and the latter an additional two weeks' training. The Workshops will emphasise: the role of UNDP, UNDRO and the other agencies of the UN system; the inclusion of disaster mitigation activities in UNDP country programming and project formulation; and preparations for the Country Workshops to be held in the trainees' countries of assignment.

This Regional-Workshop-followed-by-Country-Workshop approach aims at building up knowledge and skills, to develop teams, and to plan subsequent steps in the disaster preparedness process. Other Workshops are also organized for UNDP and UNDRO personnel at their respective headquarters as well as for donor countries.

The organizing and delivery of the Regional and Country Workshops is, in most cases, entrusted to regional collaborating institutions. However, a novel and very valuable aspect of the Programme is that UN trainers provide a vital input into these events, covering a range of topics, including, of course, those that are of direct concern to the United Nations itself. Colleagues from the agencies mentioned above are used interchangeably to represent the UN system as a whole.

❒ Training-the-trainers

The train-the-trainers course is a valuable training experience for participating agencies, and their staff members. It includes the assimilation of the most up-to-date disaster management knowledge and skills, familiarization with new training materials in this field, the acquiring of platform presentation and facilitation skills, (i.e. being able to lead others into becoming aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in the field of disaster management), and practice at hands-on disaster management training.

Two courses to train-the-trainers have been held so far: in January-February 1991 and March 1992. Forty staff members from UNDP, UNDRO, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, FAO and WHO have already participated in these courses in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. This UN cadre of trainers is participating actively in the Programme, having achieved a remarkably high standard of expertise in training others in the disaster-management field.

❒ Progress todate

The first phase of the Programme had as its primary purpose the establishment of a broad and sound base of professionalism and support upon which to build all subsequent phases. The main achievements todate were based on the original plan and include:

- ❒ the appointment of a technical co-ordinating body, technical operating partners, and regional collaborating centres for Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa
- ❒ initial negotiations for a regional collaborating centre for the Middle East
- ❒ drafting, reviewing, and production of 15 Training Modules and Trainers' Guides; 7 further Training publications are currently being prepared *(See Box A)*
- ❒ production of two training videos: on disaster mitigation and disaster response
- ❒ elaboration of an internal UNDRO policy, appointment of a permanent Working Group on Training, and a plan for internal UNDRO training activities for 1992
- ❒ completion of Regional Workshops in: Colombia (June 1991), Barbados (November 1991), and Syria (December 1991)
- ❒ completion of five country courses in Chile (October 1991), El Salvador and Guatemala (both in November 1991), and the Dominican Republic and Peru (both in March 1992)
- ❒ two train-the-trainers course mentioned above.

Scheduled activities for 1992, other than those mentioned above, are shown in *Box B*.

❒ Finance

The cost of the project will be approx. US $5.9 over the three-year period. The overall UNDRO budget is estimated at US $1.67 and that of UNDP of US $4.25.

The DMTP needs co-operation between all parties for its ambitious objectives to succeed. Its aim remains constant: to raise awareness

Proposed Schedule of Activities for 1992

Country Courses

Latin America and the Caribbean		Middle East & Europe	
Barbados	March	Turkey	May
Mexico	April	Yemen	? June
Ecuador	May/June	Iran	June
Nicaragua	June	Syria	? September
Jamaica	June	Jordan	? September
Honduras	August	Lebanon	? October
		Egypt	? November

Regional Courses

Africa I		Asia and the Pacific	
Ethiopia (Addis Ababa)	20 April - 2 May	Philippines/Thailand (Manila/Bangkok)	13-24 July

Box B

and professionalism within the UN system and to use that to nourish national policy-making and planning, in all disaster-prone countries, to target the reduction of disaster vulnerability as a priority in their development process. Progress to-date is heartening. If the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication displayed so far continues, the remaining two-years of the project should be even more successful, leading eventually to enormous progress in the saving of lives and property through significant reduction in the impact of disasters. ■

Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Regional Meeting on Disasters in Africa
Addis Ababa, 13 - 17 April 1992

The Background

The Second Ordinary Session of the OAU sponsored Inter-Agency Meeting on Disasters in Africa was convened at the World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarters in Geneva from 25 to 27 April 1990. The meeting was attended by representatives from ten organizations including UNDRO.

During this meeting UNDRO pledged to provide a consultant to the OAU General Secretariat to study the different aspects of disasters in Africa and subsequently to help in the preparation of the Regional Meeting on Disasters in Africa which was held at Africa Hall in Addis Ababa from 13 to 17 April 1992.

The Preparation

DHA-UNDRO appointed a consultant who, in co-operation with two other staff members, carried out the following tasks:

- Preparation of a questionnaire (in English and French) which was sent via the UNDP representatives to all OAU member states, (32 replies received on 1 April 1992 out of 51 OAU members states). Two UNDRO staff visited 6 OAU Member States (1-2 per region): Djibouti (+IGADD), Tanzania, Botswana, Angola, Burkina Faso (+CILLS), Algeria and discussed the questionnaire in detail.

- Preparation of documents for the meeting:

  - "Background Document" including material for discussion of the following topics: systematic approach to risk reduction at subregional and national level; ways and means to strengthen the existing disaster management 'network' in Africa. An annex summarizes the replies received from 32 countries to the OAU/UNDRO questionnaire '92*.
  - "Policies, institution building and legislation for land-use management in disaster-prone countries".
  - "Flood and Cyclone Disasters in Africa" Lessons learned and Priorities for future mitigation needs.
  - "Training for Disaster Management".

The Regional Meeting

The Regional Meeting was attended by experts from OAU Member States (51 countries), of which 26 officially attended as well as 12 representatives from relevant NGOs, and IGOs, and 16 international organizations.

Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, delivered the keynote address to the meeting. Other addresses were delivered by UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO.

An article indicating the major aspects resulting from the questionnaires, plus relevant conclusions, will appear in the May/June 1992 issue of* ***UNDRO News.* ■

IDNDR

Third Session of the Scientific and Technical Committee

The following extracts are taken from the summary report of the above meeting of the STC, prepared by its Chairman, Mr. James P. Bruce of Canada.

■ Introduction

The Third Session of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) was held in Geneva, 16-20 March 1992. It was opened by Ambassador Jan Eliasson, newly appointed United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. Mr. Eliasson emphasized the truly international character of the IDNDR, consisting of a broad and far-reaching effort for disaster reduction, encompassing contributions of not only UN agencies and national governments, but also non-governmental scientific and humanitarian organizations and the private sector. A new STC Bureau for 1992 was elected at the beginning of the session: Chairman, Mr. James P. Bruce, Canada; Vice-Chairmen Dr. Mohammed Benblidia, Algeria, Ms. Claudia Candanedo, Panama, Dr. Takeo Kinosita, Japan; Rapporteur Dr. Erich Plate, Germany. The Acting Director of the IDNDR Secretariat, informed the Committee that financial support for the Secretariat, and the work of the STC and the Special High-Level Council, while still insufficient to support projects, had continued to increase with significant contributions from Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and U.S.A.

■ Themes of the Meeting

Four main topics were the basis of most of the discussions at the Third Session of the STC.

❑ *Support for National Activities and Programmes*

A Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. E. Plate developed the main thrust of the Committee's report on this item, which recommended 3 main categories of follow-up actions: suggestions to the Special High-Level Council and its members; recommendations for actions by the STC; and Secretariat follow-up. The role of the Special High-Level Council was emphasized in promoting acceptance of the key principles of the IDNDR at the highest political level and in planning ministries. STC members must be enabled and encouraged to participate in regional and scientific meetings, and to extend technical support to national committees in developing their specific targets, country analyses and programmes. The Secretariat was urged to facilitate and co-ordinate these activities of the special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee, to improve communications with and between national committees, to assist in obtaining donor funding of national and international projects, and to co-ordinate information and training activities.

❑ *Economic Analyses*

A Working Group chaired by Dr. Benblidia considered means of improving estimates of the economic benefits of disaster mitigation, particularly improving the data bases on economic losses from natural disasters, and developing methodologies for calculating benefits and costs of mitigation measures.

Several UN agencies, especially UNDRO, WHO, WMO, national agencies and the private sector contribute substantially to disaster data but steps were proposed which would lead to greater harmonization, better guidelines and standardization, and a methodology was recommended that would make the best use of available data. The goal of this effort must be to produce economic evaluations that will be compelling to policy makers for support of appropriate levels of investment in disaster mitigation.

❑ ***Public Information Activities***

Six bi-monthly issues of the IDNDR newsletter *Stop Disasters* have been issued and initial press-runs are up to 6,000 copies in 4 languages. A Working Group chaired by Dr. Kinosita discussed means of increasing the initial press-runs of *Stop Disasters* to 30,000. Special commendation was given to Mr. Armando Mauro, and the *Osservatorio Vesuviano* and the Secretariat for this valuable publication. Several further suggestions were made including publishing parts of the new UNDRO glossary, and a "self-help" disaster mitigation column.

Planning was initiated for IDNDR Days. The theme for 14 October 1992 was agreed as "Natural Disaster Reduction for Sustainable Development" to tie in with the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992). IDNDR Day for 13 October 1993 will be on the theme "Stop Disasters in our Schools and Hospitals" on the understanding that if each community ensures safety and security of these key facilities and their "life-lines", the community itself will be well on its way to disaster minimization.

Among other public information suggestions adopted at the meeting were: A series of regional media round-tables bringing together editors, scientists and disaster managers.

❑ ***World Conference 1994***

The Working Group chaired by Ms. Candanedo made recommendations to the full Committee on plans for the World Conference. The Conference should stress progress at the national level, exchange of information and views between national committees representatives, as well as steps for taking maximum advantage of international demonstration projects. It was agreed that a Ministerial-level session should be part of the Conference, spearheaded by the Special High-level Council. The Conference will be of 1-week duration and should be held in April-May 1994 in order to make use of the output in the 1994 review to be carried out by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN General Assembly. It is expected that a host country will be announced in the near future.

■ International Demonstration Projects

The session heard very encouraging progress reports on these projects from: Non-governmental organizations such as ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions), WFEO (World Federation of Engineering Organizations), UITA (Union of International Technical Associations), UN Agencies including UNDRO, UNDP, WMO, WHO and PAHO, UNCHS (Habitat), and regional institutions (e.g. Morocco, Italy).

The Committee was most impressed with the mobilization of the scientific and engineering communities in advancing these projects and their willingness to reallocate resources and re-assign priorities to IDNDR activities. New international demonstration projects on droughts (ICSU) and on buildings to withstand disasters (WFEO) were endorsed by the Committee.

■ Input to UNCED '92

The Secretariat and STC members reported on efforts to seek recognition at the "UNCED - Earth Summit" (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992) of the importance of disaster mitigation activities in ensuring economically and environmentally sustainable development, especially in developing countries. It was reported that the UNCED Preparatory Committee currently meeting in New York, had taken steps to incorporate disaster mitigation concerns in the UNCED Agenda '21.

■ Regional IDNDR and future STC Meetings

The Organization of African Unity is sponsoring a session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 April 1992 and the Pan-American Health Organization (WHO), is organizing a Caribbean session in Kingston, Jamaica, 26-29 May 1992 following the highly successful Latin American meeting in Guatemala in September 1991. It was noted that regional sessions are needed in other areas, such as South-East Asia, and the South-West Pacific, in the two years leading to the World conference; the Secretariat was urged to seek sponsorship and hosts for such meetings. The dates of the next STC meetings were tentatively set as the first week of December 1992 and Autumn 1993.

■ Conclusions

The STC expressed considerable satisfaction with the progress made by many national committees, by the scientific community and the international agencies, and the Secretariat. The need for more "sustaining" financial support for the Secretariat and committees to carry out the many essential activities outlined at the Third Session was especially emphasized, as well as the need for donor support of national and of international demonstration projects. ■

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